

4.7 percent? That is normally good news. Well, we know it is not because of robust job growth because there were only 38,000 jobs created. Nobody thinks that is robust.

What happened in May—and the White House isn't talking about it—the unemployment rate went down because almost 700,000 American workers quit working, quit looking for a job. Think about that. In 1 month, 664,000 Americans—in 1 month, almost 700,000 Americans who had been looking for work got discouraged. They said there is nothing out there. This economy is so weak so I am quitting even looking for a job. That is why the unemployment rate went down—not a strong economy, not strong growth—discouraged American workers saying: I am done. I am not even going to look anymore. Of course, that is nothing to celebrate, 700,000 Americans completely discouraged who said: I have had enough, I am not even going to try. Think about the families. Think about the workers who made that decision.

Unfortunately, this is one of the dismal, economic legacies of the Obama years. Year after year, as exhibited by this chart, millions of Americans have simply left the workforce. They just quit. This is a chart of the labor force participation rate at the beginning of the Obama administration and now.

Year after year, you can see more Americans say: I have had it. I give up. The economy is too weak. I am quitting, quitting even looking. Again, they are not counted in the unemployment rate.

The labor force participation rate is a rather ungainly term, but what it really measures is the hope of the American worker and his or her family. So we should call it the American worker hope index. Here is the hope index for the American worker.

As you can see by the chart, it has been crashing under this President with his economic policies year after year. Hope has been declining for American workers ever since the President got into office. In fact, it has not been this low since the economic malaise years of President Jimmy Carter.

If you see the right hand here, 62 percent—the Carter malaise years—Reagan, Clinton, Bush, and then the Obama administration years, back almost on par with the Carter years. That is not a strong legacy.

The last time we had an American worker hope index this low was in 1978, the height of the Carter stagflation, when so many Americans were discouraged from even trying to work. That is the legacy we have right now.

The most recent job numbers that came out in May was the day the President gave a speech to a bunch of high school students. To the children, the high school kids, the President painted a rosy picture of the economy. He told them the economy was strong and that he had cut the unemployment rate in half. We know that is not a fully accurate statement. If we had the same

labor force participation rate today that we had at the beginning of the Obama administration, our unemployment rate would actually be 9.7 percent, almost unchanged from the beginning of 2009 when it was 10.1 percent.

So the bottom line, the main reason—indeed, almost the sole reason the official unemployment rate has been, “cut in half,” as the President said, is because millions and millions of Americans have left the workforce because the hope of the American worker has crashed, and it has now reached the same low levels it did during the Carter years.

The President did also tell these high school students that to create a better, stronger economy, we have to be honest about what our real economic challenges are.

Here, I agree with him. Let's start with an honest assessment made recently by former President Clinton. This is what he said about the Obama economy: “Millions and millions and millions and millions of people look at the pretty picture of America [Obama] painted and they cannot find themselves in it to save their lives.”

That was former Democratic President Bill Clinton talking about the loss of hope over the last 8 years. President Clinton recently said:

But the problem is, 80 percent of the American people are still living on what they were living on the day before the [2008 financial] crash. And about half the American people, after you adjust for inflation, are living on what they were living on the last day I—

Meaning President Clinton—

was president 15 years ago. So that's what's the matter.

That is President Clinton. He is talking honestly about this economy. That is what honesty looks like. Family incomes have declined during the Obama years, wages have been stagnant, and the economic hope of the American worker has crashed to levels not seen since Jimmy Carter.

I close with a few words for the American people as we get to the final months of the Obama administration.

The President is going to make the claim—and some of his supporters and maybe even Secretary Clinton are going to make the claim—that the unemployment rate during the Obama years went from 10.1 percent to 4.7 percent. They are going to talk about this. They are going to make people believe that somehow this is a great accomplishment.

While technically true, what the President is not going to do, what Secretary Clinton is not going to do, is unpack the numbers to actually tell the whole truth because that unemployment rate decline is due primarily to the fact that so many American workers have simply quit looking for work. That is the full truth.

So when you hear this great number—10.1 percent unemployment all the way down to 4.7 percent—the real number is 9.7 percent. The real number is in

this index. The real number is that the American workers' hope over the last 8 years has crashed.

So when the President and the White House continue to tell us that everything is fine, that jobs are plentiful, that the unemployment rate has been slashed in half, that our economy is strong relative to other countries, it is very important to look at what they are really saying. We shouldn't believe that. And the vast majority of Americans don't believe it because they are hurting. They are hurting because this economy is hurting. Millions of Americans want to work but can't find a job. Millions of Americans have quit looking for a job. And, as the President says, we need to recognize that fact and to be honest about it. Only then can we do what is one of the most important jobs this Senate can do, which is grow our economy again and create real job opportunities for the millions of American workers who want to work but have been so discouraged they have left the workforce.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider individually either of the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 357 and 358; that there be 30 minutes for debate only on each nomination, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time on the respective nominations, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my friend from Arkansas, Mr. BOOZMAN, in cosponsoring a resolution recognizing the 70th Anniversary of the Fulbright Program on August 1, 2016.

Seventy years ago, Senator William Fulbright established this program for the “promotion of international goodwill through the exchange of students in the fields of education, culture and science.” The Fulbright Program receives funding each year with strong bipartisan support from Congress and is also supported by 50 binational commissions worldwide.

Since its establishment, the Fulbright Program has become the United States’ flagship educational exchange program. There have been more than 370,000 participants from around the world and all 50 States since the program was established. Fulbright alumni include 33 heads of state, 54 Nobel laureates, and 82 Pulitzer Prize winners.

The Institute for International Education has administered the Fulbright Program since 1946 and has worked closely with the Department of State to ensure that the Fulbright Program is one of the most prestigious and effective international exchange programs in the world.

The Fulbright Program makes a significant contribution to the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and understanding between Americans and people worldwide. It awards 8,000 grants annually, including to 1,600 U.S. students, 4,000 foreign students, 1,200 U.S. scholars, and 900 visiting scholars, in addition to several hundred teachers and professionals.

Increasingly, it seems as if the world is being torn apart by intolerance, hatred, violence, and isolationism. I am convinced that academic and cultural exchange programs, like Fulbright, are more relevant today than ever because they provide a strong antidote to these trends. Exchanges between individuals from around the world who share ideas and work together on issues and problems confronting the world can build relationships that endure for a lifetime.

I congratulate the Fulbright Program, the alumni, and all who have supported the program for 70 years of promoting international goodwill, and I thank Senator BOOZMAN for this resolution.

TRIBUTE TO DR. WILLIAM GLEN HOWLAND

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, after 17 years spent protecting Lake Champlain, Dr. William Glen Howland—Bill, to most of us—will retire this month as the director of the Lake Champlain Basin Program. We should all thank him and recognize his contributions to the conservation and restoration of Vermont’s jewel, Lake Champlain, credit him for his many contributions to scientific research, and thank him for his commitment to the local community in which he lives and works.

Under Bill’s steady and thoughtful guidance, the Lake Champlain Basin Program, LCBP, has flourished in its mission to coordinate and fund work

by Vermont, New York, and Quebec to protect Lake Champlain’s water quality, fisheries, wetlands, wildlife, recreation, and cultural resources. At the Gordon Center House on Vermont’s Grand Isle, Bill has assembled and guided a team of exceptional scientists and dedicated public servants. Bill has led the Lake Champlain Basin Program to become nationally and internationally recognized in the fields of ecosystem monitoring, prevention of the spread of invasive species, water pollution control, cultural heritage resource interpretation and protection, and public education. It is a model to which other watershed and basin programs aspire.

I have often looked to Bill for his expert advice in developing and implementing Federal legislation and programs. Bill worked with me on the Daniel Patrick Moynihan Lake Champlain Basin Program Act of 2002, the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership Act adopted in 2006, and the Lake Champlain Ecosystem Restoration Authority, which was adopted as part of the Water Resources Development Act. Bill has testified more than once before Senate committees about the importance of environmental conservation programs and projects in the Lake Champlain and Great Lakes regions.

I have been impressed by Bill’s ability to bring all types of partners to the table, including local citizens, recreation organizations, heritage organizations, county planning offices, the Governors of Vermont and New York, Federal agencies, and even the Premier of Quebec. Bill’s greatest skill may be diplomacy, considering he has confirmed trilateral Memoranda of Understanding with New York, Vermont, and Quebec in 2000, 2003, and 2010, has helped to guide two International Joint Commission inquiries, and has contributed to international trans-boundary conservation work through LAKENET, UNESCO HELP, and NANBO international lake summits. Remarkably, year after year, he has been able to achieve consensus on the allocation of millions of dollars in Lake Champlain funds among multiple Federal agencies, Vermont, New York, many private organizations, and countless partners on the ground.

Bill’s dedication to protecting Lake Champlain and the environment extends well beyond his tenure as director of the LCBP. During his many years as a faculty member and as a member of the research staff at Middlebury College, the University of Vermont, and McGill University, Bill has advanced the field of geography, particularly biophysical remote sensing and terrain modeling of northern ecosystems, which are critical tools as we track global climate change. He has been a role model and adviser to many young scientists, helping to shape their studies and their careers. He also served as the executive director of the Green Mountain Audubon Society for 5

years, before taking the reins at the LCBP.

Like so many great Vermonters, Bill’s service to his local and regional community has been remarkable. Many of Bill’s neighbors owe their health and well-being to his decades of service as an advanced emergency medical technician on the Richmond and Grand Isle rescue squads. Bill has been an active board member of the Lake Champlain Committee and served on the Burlington Barge Canal Superfund panel, receiving a U.S. EPA Environmental Merit Award in 1997.

Director Howland has my sincere gratitude for his years of dedicated service to his local community, to the Lake Champlain Basin, and all of Vermont, as well as to U.S. national and international conservation efforts and scientific research. I expect and hope that he will stay active on all of these fronts. Bill has much more to contribute. I wish him well in his retirement, and I hope that he and his wife, Betsy, will now get a chance to relax on the shores of Lake Champlain at their home in Isle La Motte.

TRIBUTE TO POLLY NICHOL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to recognize the achievements and contributions of a remarkable advocate and a celebrated leader in my home State of Vermont.

Later this month, Polly Nichol will retire from her position as director of housing of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. For more than 35 years, Polly’s career in affordable housing and community development has stood as the gold standard of excellence to those in her field. Her effective leadership across Vermont has inspired countless new collaborations, new housing opportunities for our most vulnerable, and the preservation of historic structures that make up Vermont’s unique character. It is not an exaggeration to say that the quality of life for many in the Green Mountains is greater as a result of Polly Nichol’s legacy.

Polly joined the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board in 1988 as its first director of housing. There, she became known for establishing creative partnerships to bring together developers, preservationists, and advocates alike. This work was grounded in her prior experience at the local community action agency, where she led the establishment of two neighborhood reinvestment groups in nearby Barre and Randolph. These groups are now part of NeighborWorks America, a program I have long supported for its investments in rural communities across the country.

Polly’s career in advocacy and leadership has been vast and multifaceted. In Vermont, the challenge of securing safe, affordable housing is far too familiar for many. Overcoming this challenge requires a strong network of advocates and experts ready and willing